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INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE  
RUFOAOA/USNIC SARAJEVO  
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/Joint STAFF WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS SARAJEVO 001196

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STATE FOR EUR (DICARLO), EUR/SCE (ENGLISH, FOOKS, BELL), P (BAME), D (SMITH), NSC FOR BRAUN, OSD FOR FLORY, USNIC FOR WEBER, GREGORIAN

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TAGS: MARR MASS PREL BK

SUBJECT: BOSNIA: ONE UNIFORM, ONE ARMED FORCE- AND ONE FUTURE

¶1. Defense Minister Radovanovic unveiled the new uniform of the unified Bosnian armed force during a ceremony on May 25. For the first time since the abolishment of the entity armies on December 31, 2005, former combatants stood shoulder to shoulder completely indistinguishable from one other. Purchased with U.S. foreign military financing (FMF), the new battle dress uniform (BDU) is modeled on the digitized woodland camouflage pattern similar to that of the U.S. Marine Corps. The local media heralded the donation as further proof of the strong ties between Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and the United States of America.

¶2. The uniforms, however, represent more than a bilateral transfer of military equipment. For the Bosnian people, they are visible proof that progress on defense reform and a multi-ethnic armed force is possible. Defense Minister Radovanovic underscored this in his closing remarks. "The new uniform is a symbol for Bosnia and Herzegovina," said Radovanovic, "it exemplifies one step farther away from our painful past and one huge step toward a better future." BiH Chief of the Joint Staff LTGEN Podzic added that "the armed force will work hard to build respect for this new uniform, which thus far has no scars on it."

MCELHANEY